

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES

October 8, 2009

Members Present: Daniel Clapp, Joan Golowich, Joel Gordon, Doris Holden, Rosemary Kofler, Kathy Koplow, Mary Jane Laus, Barbara Sutherland, Juana Trujillo

Absent: none

Select Board Liaison: absent

Staff Present: Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant)

Guests: Randall Stokes (UMass Social and Demographic Research Institute)

Welcome:

Dan Clapp, Co-Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the September 17, 2009 meeting were approved and accepted.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

Ad Hoc Survey Committee:

Randall Stokes presented information on the progress of the 2010 survey. Of the 1100 postcards mailed on September 14, fifty were undeliverable. Recipients were given two weeks to respond on-line. Those who did not respond on-line were mailed a paper copy on September 28. Thus far, 198 people responded on-line and 150 have responded to the mailed survey - about 34% of the viable sample. The minimal respectable number for publishing would be 40%. The **on-line** information received thus far is atypical of our clientele because of these respondents - 60% have post graduate degrees, more than half have an income of greater than \$75,000/year. Many are young, working and don't use the Senior Center much. Those who do use the Senior Center use it intensely.

Elders who **mail in** their responses are expected to be older and reflect the needs and profile of our primary users.

It was suggested that we post reminders to people to fill out the survey in strategic places such as Ann Whalen, the Clark House, and to MOW recipients. We can offer assistance to those who may be visually impaired or need help.

Friends of Amherst Senior Center Treasurer's Report:

A handout was provided. There is \$19,560.30 in the checking account and \$67,010.76 in the investment account.

Doris and Shirley Lauder talked with CPAs in Hadley. They are looking into installing an accounting program (Quick Book) at the Senior Center. It would benefit three accounts - the Friends account, the Program account and the Travel account. The computer program could produce necessary federal reports.

The Treasurer's report was approved and accepted.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Friends Update:

Doris reported.

- There were two resignations - Norma Packard as Clerk (she will stay on the Board) and Susan Whitbourne, President. A letter of gratitude will go to Susan for her hard work.
- The Board voted to have 275 Historical Booklets printed. As many as possible will be hand-delivered to save on postage.
- Contributors to the Friends will be members for one year according to the by-laws.
- A letter will be sent to all members announcing the Annual Meeting and requesting nominations to the Board.
- Doris will meet with Deb Jankowski next week to get the amended by-laws. Deb suggested having a separate document on Policies and Procedures. It would have more operational details.
- The Annual Meeting will be November 6, 2009, at 2:00 PM, in Room 101 on the Bangs.
- A fund drive will take place with the mailing of the December-January *Senior Spirit*. Barbara Slovin, Vice President, will conduct the Annual Meeting.

Historical Booklet Printing:

Nancy reiterated that 275 copies would be printed. A letter of thanks will go to all who contributed to help produce the booklet.

Parade Summary:

Rosemary reported that the 250th parade on September 27 was very successful despite a rainy day. There were many good floats. The Senior Center carried a large banner. The Senior Center marchers were warmly received and cheered by the crowds.

HVES Grant Outcome:

Nancy reported on the first of two applications – the renewal of the Nutrition Grant requesting additional money in order to hire Evie Ross five days a week to help Ferne with the lunch program. HVES did not have the money to meet that increase. We will continue to get the \$1.19 per meal delivered.

Maura collaborated on the second grant. It focuses on needs and offers amongst elders – people helping each other or ‘neighbors being neighborly’. The program of building a sense of community will start at the Clark House, Chestnut Court Apartments and Ann Whalen House. The grant provides \$4,250. Evie Ross will work five hours per week with that program. She speaks Spanish.

Maura met with Wendy Ewald, an artist and teacher at Amherst College. Wendy is interested and excited about working with four students on exchanging, trading services or bartering amongst residents at the Clark House, Ann Whalen and Chestnut Court. She wants to create some public art about the project in order to attract public interest. Wendy also wants to produce a newsletter containing information about the project and ideas for implementation. She will look into long-term funding.

Room 101 Letter:

Rosemary asked for final edits for the letter to Larry Shaffer about the uses of Room 101. It will be signed by members of the sub-committee (Dan, Joel and Rosemary) and delivered to Larry and Select Board members today.

Senior Health Advisory Group (SHAG):

Dan, a member of SHAG, spoke of the importance of having regular communication between the COA and SHAG. He spoke of SHAG's concern about continuity of care in the elderly when discharged from the hospital. Many people seem to fall through the cracks when they go home. SHAG has set up a focus group in which elders can meet and talk about their personal experiences after hospitalization. The information yielded will then be shared with the medical community at CDH, including the VNA, in hopes of improving the continuity of care. Another concern is the frequent improper use of walkers and canes by the elderly. Training is often inadequate and accidents occur as a result. SHAG members talked of having a series of classes on how to properly use walkers and canes, making those accessories safer. **Doris** suggested that such classes also be held at Applewood in the name of the COA.

Flu Vaccine:

Nancy reported on the Flu Clinic last week, which went very smoothly. The manufacturer of the seasonal flu vaccine also makes the Swine flu vaccine. Because demands are great, we did not receive all 300 doses of the seasonal flu vaccine that was ordered. We used up all of the 236 doses that we did receive last week and have none left for the make-up clinic on October 14. That clinic will have to be rescheduled.

Dan suggested giving patients a slip of paper at each flu clinic stating exactly what vaccine was given on what date.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE**Highland Valley Elder Services:**

Joan and Barbara attended the meeting on October 5. HVES has had budget cuts. The State will monitor HVES more closely. There is a waiting list for home care due to lack of funds. The list is prioritized by urgency of need.

NEW BUSINESS**Service Approach Transition:**

Maura is now working on locating volunteers who will oversee projects that she no longer has time for. Elana Victor is organizing the Bread Program. Nancy Beswick and Lise Armstrong are working with Amherst College students and leading the Friendly Visitor Program. Parvin Niroomand is organizing the Brown Bag Program. Maura needs someone for the Survival Center Food Box Program and the Private Pay Home Help.

Budget:

Nancy had a Department Head meeting. The budget is VERY bad. State revenue is down. More cuts are certain in November and in next year's budget. Local tax revenues from hotel tax and meals tax are already figured into the budget. More cuts to Senior Center personnel could put us in jeopardy of being able to continue.

STAFF REPORTS**Amherst College Students and Friendly Visiting:**

Maura said that Lisa Raskin, Professor at Amherst College, teaches a Psychology of Aging course annually. Her goal is to match up each student with an elder to develop a relationship with that elder and relate their experiences to what they are studying in the course. A Junior

student, Bessie Young, was hired by Lisa as a liaison between the students and Nancy Beswick. Twenty students are now matched up and report very positive experiences.

Japan:

Nancy will be going to Japan on October 15 for one week.

The COA adjourned at 10:45 AM.

The next meeting of the COA will be held on November 12, 2009 at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary

The approved minutes of the September 17, 2009 meeting were delivered to the Select Board Office to be filed.